

**Claims**

1. According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a vehicle load area liner comprising a sheet  
5 foldable to form a receptacle having a base and a wall around the base, the receptacle being arrangable in use to be mounted in the load area of a vehicle, and wherein at least a portion of the wall of the receptacle is unfoldable to provide a flap able to mask the threshold of  
10 the load area, when the vehicle load area is open, in use.

2. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in Claim 1 wherein a sheet comprises a substantially quadrilateral-shaped sheet material in its unfolded state.

15 3. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in Claim 1 or 2 wherein the corners of the sheet material are chamfered or fluted to enable efficient folding into the receptacle.

20 4. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any one of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the sheet comprises folds which enable the sheet to be folded such that the base of the receptacle is substantially quadrilateral-shaped.

25 5. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the folds at or near the corners of the sheet material are oriented such that the corners are fluted to enable efficient folding of the wall of the sheet from the base.

30 6. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising means to releasably retain the sheet in at least a partially folded configuration.

7. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the retention means enable independent retention of the threshold flap on the receptacle, such that the  
5 flap can be maintained as part of the wall of the receptacle, and released by user to form a flap when desired.

8. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding  
10 claim wherein the folds are oriented such that the wall of the receptacle is taller at one or more portions.

9. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the sheet is square or rectangular and the  
15 folds are oriented such that one wall of the folded receptacle is taller than the other walls.

10. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding claim wherein at least a portion of the wall is folded  
20 back on itself to form a double-backed portion capable of being unfolded to form a wall portion taller than the other wall portions.

11. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding  
25 claim wherein the sheet further comprises gripping means capable of gripping a load area floor in use.

12. A vehicle load area liner as claimed in any preceding  
claim constructed from plastics, paper, card, metal or any  
30 mixture thereof.

13. A method of protecting a vehicle load area comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a liner of any one of Claims 1 to 12, and in any order;
- (b) folding a liner to form a receptacle; and
- 5 (c) mounting the liner on the floor of the vehicle load area.

14. A method as claimed in Claim 13 further comprising unfolding the threshold flap of the receptacle to mask the  
10 threshold of the vehicle load area.

15. A method as claimed in Claim 13 or 14 wherein the threshold flap is of dimensions such that, when unfolded, it protrudes past the threshold of the vehicle load area.

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16. A method as claimed in any one of Claims 13 to 15 further comprising the step of loading goods into the vehicle load area, and folding the threshold flap back onto the receptacle to form a complete receptacle around  
20 the loaded goods.